

WHAT WALLER GOT

It Was the Cause of His Persecution by the French.

The Ex-United States Consul Is Tried Before a French Court-Martial and Given a Cruel and Vindictive Sentence.

Advises from Port Louis, island of Mauritius, state that John L. Waller, formerly United States consul at Tananarive, island of Madagascar, has been tried before a court-martial by the French military authorities. He has been found guilty of having been in correspondence with the Hovas, and has been sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment.

As soon as the state department at Washington shall receive official information of this outrage, the American government will enter into an emphatic protest. Parties familiar with the history of the case explain it as follows:

The prime minister and commander in chief of Madagascar in March of last year granted a valuable concession in the great rubber district of Fort Dauphin, on the southern coast of Madagascar, to ex-United States Consul Waller. It was far the largest and most important surface concession ever granted in Madagascar, and was given on terms much more reasonable than any ever before given to anyone in the country. The concession covers an area of 25 square miles—more than five times the area of New York city. The lands, besides producing rubber trees of excellent quality, and vines, abound in ebony, mahogany, rosewood and other valuable timber, and are adapted to the cultivation of tea, coffee, sugar and vanilla.

The concession was secured by Waller in the face of the repeated protest of the French resident general and the French colonists. According to the French pioneer colonists, all the nationalities engaged in the india-rubber trade were injured by it. The French resident general disputed the right of the Hovas government to make the concession, because, under the protectorate which France assumes to exercise over Madagascar, according to a treaty with Great Britain signed in 1893, France

JOHN L. WALLER.
(Ex-Consul to Madagascar)

claims the right to control Madagascar's foreign affairs. The native government of the island, however, repudiates the French claim to a protectorate, and insists that the granting of concessions is strictly within the province of local administration. The last two American consuls at Tananarive, the city in which Waller was stationed, have presented their credentials to the Malagasy government, thereby causing friction between themselves and the French resident.

Advises from Antananarivo under date of May 31, 1894, announced that in consequence of the concession to Waller, the French resident had entered a formal protest declaring that France would refuse to recognize any concession made to foreigners without her permission. The New York World early last June published a letter from E. Underwood Harvey, editor of the Madagascar News, treating exhaustively the complications which had grown out of which might grow out of this grant, and among other things he said: "It is time for the great American government to put its foot down and say that American enterprise in this country shall no longer be cramped by French bullying."

Mr. Waller's life on the island has not been an easy one, and he has suffered indignities from the French of which he has been compelled to complain to his superior, Consul Weller. Advises from Tananarive, published February 22 of this year, said that the French were incensed to the point of violence against Waller, believing that his representation had caused the withdrawal of its alleged instructions to Consul Weller to obtain recognition through the French resident.

When John L. Waller was appointed consul at Tananarive in 1891 he was a resident of Kansas city, Kan. He is a colored man, and was born a slave in Missouri in 1836. He was emancipated at the age of eleven years and taken to Iowa, where he received a common school education, read law and was admitted to the bar. He moved to Kansas in 1878, and soon became prominent in the politics of the southwest. He is a republican. He was the only African-American presidential elector in 1888. He was the first colored member of the Kansas republican state central committee, being chosen by acclamation in 1890. He received many favors from different state administrations of Kansas, and was superintendent of the blind asylum at Kansas City when appointed consul.

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